5: Bahrain G-5 (1926-1937) 1937 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

871 Shia boys returned to the Manamah school. Towards the end of 1354 (1935-36) a new school was opened in Sitrah, which was attended by about 30 boys, and it is proposed that several more schools are to be opened in other districts in the Shia villages.

874 **Technical Education.** In 1936, classes were started in the Manamah and Muharraq boys' schools for teaching carpentry and simple mechanics. Two skilled carpenters and a mechanic were obtained from Syria through the Beyrout University. About a dozen boys are now learning carpentry and another class is being taught by the mechanic. They are now working in classrooms in the schools, but this arrangement is inconvenient as the noise disturbs the other classes and the space is small. A simple building is to be put up close to the school, to be fitted out as a carpentry and engineering shop.

463 In Bahrain, all carpenters, masons, and most of the mechanics are foreigners. There is great demand for good work, and masons, etc., earn very high pay. There are undoubtedly great opportunities for trained men in these professions, but the chief difficulty in teaching practical trades of this kind is that many of the boys and their parents regard such work as derogatory. They would prefer to work as clerks at lower pay than as carpenters, masons, or mechanics.

871 Education in Bahrain is not compulsory; all Government schools are free, but students are made to pay for their books and materials. It has been suggested that fees for attending school should be charged, but if this were done the attendance would be restricted to the sons and daughters of people of means, who are mostly foreigners. It has also been suggested that free education should be provided for Bahrain subjects only and that foreigners should pay, but when this question was examined it was found that almost all the children of foreign parentage attending the Government schools were legally Bahrain subjects, having been born in Bahrain and not registered as protected persons.

There is a difference in the subjects taught in the various schools. In the country schools the boys are taught reading, writing, simple arithmetic, and the Quran. Girls learn reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing, embroidery, hygiene, and Quran. They have made remarkably good progress in sewing and embroidery and now produce work which would find a ready sale. More advanced subjects are taught in the Manamah and Muharraq boys' schools, where the programme includes English, history, geography, mathematics, book-keeping, and the system of diving accounts. Leaving certificates are issued by the Department of Education to boys who pass an examination when they leave the schools from the two top forms. No boy is taken into Government service unless he possesses one of these certificates, but unfortunately their value has decreased since the Bahrain Petroleum Company has taken to employing boys who do not hold certificates. During the last two years, about sixty boys from the top classes in the Manamah and Muharraq schools left school and obtained employment as clerks and gaugers with the oil company; others have been taken into Government service as pupil teachers, apprentices in the Customs Department, and in other Government offices.

Games are encouraged at all schools, and the older boys play football. There is also a company of Boy Scouts in Manamah and Muharraq. At the end of each term a play is produced and acted by the older boys. The play is usually very topical. These entertainments are extremely popular with the public and are well produced and excellently acted.

The chief difficulties which beset the path of education are the complete lack of discipline among the boys in their own homes, the religious differences between the two sects, Shias and Sunnis, and the suspicious attitude of local people towards foreign teachers, who are essential until the people of Bahrain have attained a sufficient degree of education to fit them to be teachers. The question of punishments is another problem; none of the punishments, except corporal punishment, which are used in civilised countries have any effect in Bahrain. If boys are ordered not to come to school because they misbehave, they do not care, nor do they mind being kept back after school hours, and most of them are quite indifferent to losing marks.

Bahrain Boys at Beyrout University. In 1929, seven boys from the Government schools were sent to the Beyrout University to be educated there at Government expense. Three of them were members of the Ruling Family, the others were sons of merchants who were chosen by the headmaster of the Muharraq school. All of them were Sunnis,

Bahrein produces dates of very good quality, though inferior to the Iraqi and especially to the Persian variety known in the United States as the Bassorah date. The entire date production of Bahrein is consumed locally, either fresh or dried, or in a powder which is used like wheat flour for the making of bread, the common food of the rich.

The economic value of the date palm does not stop with the fruit. All other parts of the palm yield products of practical value to Bahreinis; their life would be impossible without it. The trunk furnishes timber for houses and boats; the midribs of the leaves go into crates and furniture; the leaf bases are used for fuel; the small leaves are used in basketry, the fiber for cordage and packing, and the fruit stalks for rope and fuel.

Under the shade of their palm trees and around their springs, the Bahreinis live their relatively simple life, producing some vegetables, weaving a few shawls, making sailcloth or reed mats, and breeding their donkeys. The Bahrein donkeys, or "Bandari," were bought by donkey lovers for their endurance, their height, and other celebrated qualities.

The main occupations of the townspeople are commercial and maritime, mostly fishing and handling the transit shipments which are one of Bahrein's largest sources of revenue. The greatest economic asset of the islands, however, despite the value of the recently discovered oil, is still the pearl fisheries.

PEARL FISHING

The chief source of income of the islands before the discovery and exploitation of oil reserves in the nineteen thirties was pearl fishing. Before the rise of competition from the Japanese pearl fisheries and worldwide economic crisis of 1930, the industry employed more than 20,000 persons annually, and revenue from the pearls, which were exported principally to Paris and London, amounted to about £2,000,000[1] annually. Single pearls often bring enormous prices; for example, the most beautiful

1. Except where otherwise specified, pounds referred to throughout are English pounds sterling.

8:Qubain S-5 (1952-53)1955 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

indicates — they constitute the poorer and lower classes of society and manifest all the markings of a minority group. Until recently they lived hardly above the servile state, their occupational specialization being exclusively the cultivation of the soil and other menial labor. The arrival of the British, which has assured them some security in person and a guarantee of minimum rights, and the development of the oil industry, which has opened possibilities of alternative employment, have had the effect of gradually raising these people from their status as second-class citizens.

The Sunnis act as the majority group. This has been especially true since a Sunni tribe established its political dominance over the islands in the 18th century. The Sunnis present a common front toward other groups; among themselves, however, they are divided into several communities and tribes. The largest Sunni community is the Huwalah. Its members are townsmen living by trade; and as townsmen everywhere, they do not manifest marked feelings of solidarity. They can perhaps be regarded as the nucleus of a future middle class.

The Utab, if not the largest Sunni tribe, is the most influential. This is due to the fact that the Khalifah family, one of its sub-tribes, has ruled the islands without serious interruption for almost 200 years. Every member of the Khalifah family has the title of "shaykh." Along with the privileges and prestige he enjoys as a result of his position, he has certain obligations and restrictions on his conduct and manner of life. For instance, in recent years many Bahrain subjects, especially among the younger city population, have taken to wearing European dress. No member of the ruling family may do so.

The two other Sunni tribes of any importance are the Sadah and the Dawasir, the first because of its alleged sacred origin, the second because of its comparative wealth.[1]

Unlike the Shi'is, the Sunnis are relatively mobile. They depend for their livelihood on trade, pearling, fishing, and more recently on employment in the oil industry. Boat building also used to be a fairly important industry. It is very seldom that a Sunni is found engaged in agriculture as a life occupation except as a landowner.

As has been shown, among the two main native elements social division and social tensions rest on religious foundations. Religious affiliation determines to a considerable degree the social and economic position of the individual. When mass violence breaks out it has so far been in terms of Shi'is and Sunnis, never in terms of economic groups.

An interesting development in recent years is the stress of the dominant

[1] Most of the Dawasir returned in anger to the Arabian mainland in the early 1920's, soon after Shaykh Hamad, whom they disliked, assumed control. For the story of their return see Government of Bahrain, *Administrative Report for the Years 1926-1937* (Bahrain, 1937), pp. 8-9.

8:Qubain S-6 (1952-53)1955 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

An interesting development in recent years is the stress of the dominant
186 group, the Sunnis, on the unity and brotherhood of all Muslims and Arabs.
659 In 1950, when the second census was made, it was planned to count the two groups separately. This proposal, however, was construed as a British scheme to divide the Muslims and set them against each other. Strong objections were made by both groups, but primarily by the Sunnis, to the government and consequently this aspect of the census was abandoned. No such objections were raised during the census only nine years earlier.

186 Two factors can perhaps account for this rather nascent stress on unity: emerging nationalism and new economic forces. The conception of nationality is a Western contribution and a new arrival in the Persian Gulf. In Bahrain it is still a vague idea and certainly has not replaced to any degree the existing loyalties. It manifests itself in two ways: first, negatively in a desire to expel the foreigner (this has considerable appeal: it is concrete, intellectually easy to grasp, can be used as a rallying cry, and above all does not conflict with established social patterns); and second, positively, in a confused ideal of a pan-Arab, pan-Islamic union. No clear distinction is drawn between the two last concepts and the terms are used interchangeably. It must be admitted, however, that the pan-Arab aspect of the ideal predominates. This new spirit of nationalism has had the effect of creating a greater emphasis on unity among the native population. Furthermore, through this intellectual device the two groups can now present a common front against foreigners to protect their rights and interests, whether real or imaginary.

565 The new economic force for unity is the oil industry. On the surface
178 things seem as they have always been. In fact a change, subtle and hard
464 to detect, has taken place. The oil industry, as indicated previously, has
186 opened the doors of employment to the Shi'is. This has resulted in bettering slightly their economic condition and consequently their relative status vis-à-vis other groups. Furthermore, such employment has meant that they are no longer restricted to agriculture. They can now sell their labor and skills as everyone else in a wider and more favorable market. On the job at the company installations, Shi'i and Sunni are brought together as laborers or artisans and placed on the same footing. For the first time in their history it has become possible for individuals from both groups to collaborate in certain areas of action, not as Shi'is or Sunnis, but as members of an economic group.

THE JEWS

162 A third native religious group is the small Jewish minority comprising
563 about 250 persons. Its members are well known for their industry, their
463 higher standard of living, their higher rate of education, and their amenability to Western influences. They are exclusively engaged in trade and money changing.

8:Qubain S-5 (1952-53)1955 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

did, or sell out and return to the mother country. Those who remained are engaged either in trade or employed by the oil company or some other business establishment. In the last few years the government has been refusing to grant citizenship to Persian residents even though they may legally qualify.[12]

The Indians, the second largest foreign community, are in a certain sense in a position similar to that of the Persians. Bahrain, like other principalities in the Persian Gulf, has had a long association with the subcontinent through trade. In 1913, when the Bahrain Order-in-Council was passed, the country became administratively subject to the jurisdiction of the Governor-General of India.

The Indians constitute a prosperous and fairly well educated community. Some are engaged in trade on a big scale or as petty merchants. The rest — and they are the majority — are employed either by the government, the oil company, the British military and civil establishment, or other foreign business concerns in the country. They work mostly as clerks, foremen, cooks, waiters, and domestic servants.

Various explanations have been made as to why Indians are employed in such large numbers in preference to local Bahrainis or persons from other nationalities. In the first place, Bahrain does not have enough young men with a minimum of education and clerical or industrial training to fill these positions. Secondly, in view of British policy to tie Bahrain to India, it was only natural to look to it for the necessary labor supply. Furthermore, India could supply labor well trained by the British and used to their ways. Finally, Indian labor could be obtained at a lower rate than equally skilled labor from other countries.

The status of Indians is a rather peculiar one, for they live in a social zone all by themselves. They are resented by the native population and accepted only as subordinates by Westerners, with whom they would like to associate and with whom they would like to be classified. This is true especially of the clerical and professional group among them.

The causes of Bahraini resentment against them are psychological and economic in nature. In the first place, they constitute a community which is definitely foreign and makes a point of it, and in some respects looks down on the local population. This is especially the case among the white-collar workers.

Secondly, on the whole, the Indian community wields power far beyond its number. The people in Bahrain see Indians in government and business establishments and develop the feeling that they are being governed by them along with the British.

In the third place, clerical positions occupied by Indians and other for-

[12] Cf. n. 7, p. 6.

8:Qubain S-5 (1952-53)1955 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

609 foreigners are "kept in their place" there circulate by word of mouth — a method of communication highly developed in the Middle East — and exaggerated several times in the process. One of the central themes of the local Bahrain press is a comparison between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain in this respect. As is to be expected, this is causing a feeling of frustration among the natives and creating an atmosphere of restiveness and increasing antagonism toward foreigners.

In Kuwait a rather ambitious development program has been under way for several years, made possible by increasing oil royalties. There is an atmosphere of feverish activity, psychologically exaggerated because of its concentration in a small area. By contrast, life in Bahrain is slow and development sober but limited, in view of the comparatively small oil revenues. This causes some jealousy which finds an emotional outlet in an increasing suspicion of foreigners and increasing demands on the major companies, such as the Bahrain Petroleum Company, to do more for the country than they have been doing so far.

FOREIGN ARAB GROUPS

563 A rather large number of foreign Arabs live in Bahrain. They can be
167 divided into two main groups which in custom and social mores have little
● 463 in common. The first group is composed of Arabs from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Muscat, Qatar, and Yemen. These people have always been part of the scene. They come and go as they have always done, with hardly any
[601] restriction on their movement. Many of them are related to people in Bahrain by blood or marriage and are looked upon as "cousins," *awlad al-'amm*, a term which carries with it all the emotional overtones of the traditions of tribal life. Some of them are merchants; a large number, especially of those from Oman, Muscat, Qatar, and Yemen, are employed by the oil industry as common laborers, and others work with local industries. Their community life and standard of living do not vary a great deal from that of the local population; in fact they are hardly distinguishable from it.

The second group of foreign Arabs, made up of a small number of Egyptians, Syrians, Lebanese, Iraqis, and Palestinians, is comparatively new to the area. On the whole, their standard of living is probably higher than that of any other group with the exception of the Westerners. Few are engaged in trade; the majority are white-collar workers.

563 Although they are largely new arrivals, they already exert considerable
875 influence on the life of the country. Unlike all other foreigners, they are
208 genuinely welcomed and looked up to by the local population. They are the
177 missionaries of Arab nationalism. Most of the high-school and a good number of the elementary-school teachers in Bahrain come from this group (see Table IV); in this key position, it can be truly said of them that they